



21 December 2011

Dear Stakeholder,

On 22 July, the Government decided to establish a new further education and training authority – SOLAS – which will have strategic responsibility for further education currently delivered by Vocational Education Committees (VECs) and training currently delivered by FÁS.

As part of that decision, the Government approved the establishment of the SOLAS Implementation Group, under the chairmanship of the Minister for Training and Skills, Ciaran Cannon TD. The Group is charged with drafting an Action Plan for the establishment of SOLAS.

As part of drafting the Action Plan, the Group agreed that it was important to get the views of relevant stakeholders on the key issues. Therefore, please find attached a [Consultation Paper](#) which gives some background to the decision to establish SOLAS and identifies four key policy areas on which your views are sought.

The Government has set an ambitious timeframe for the establishment of SOLAS and the Group firmly intends to meet that timeframe. **In order to assist the Group in that endeavour, please submit your views using this [link](#) no later than 5.00 p.m., Friday, 20 January 2012. Late submissions or those made outside this link will not be accepted.**

Your views will feed into the drafting process for the Action Plan. The Group plans to invite stakeholders to an information session in early February to present the main findings of this consultation exercise and give an update on progress achieved and progress planned. We will be in further contact in due course in relation to the scheduling of that event.

Queries in relation to the Paper can be e-mailed to Kevin Hogan at solas@education.gov.ie.

Yours faithfully,

Kevin Hogan
Skills Division
Department of Education and Skills